

Somerville Dog Owners Group
Questionnaire for Candidates for 2005 Municipal Elections

Name: Bill White

Office for which you are seeking election: Alderman at Large (incumbent)

1. How many times a month do you visit Somerville parks and/or playgrounds? Please list the parks you visit, and, for each park, the number of times per week and the reason(s) you visit.

Foss Park, variable number of visits per month. I go there with my dog Buzzie. In part, because of my personal experience with owning two dogs and having no park in Somerville to which I could take them, I have advocated for the creation of "dog parks," especially with off-leash areas, since I was first elected to the Board of Aldermen.

2. Somerville City Ordinance, 12-51, "Dogs in Parks and Playgrounds," leaves it to the discretion of the Commissioner of Public Works to post "No Dogs Allowed Signs at city parks. Do you know of any parks under the jurisdiction of the City that are *not* posted "No Dogs Allowed"? If so, which ones?

None of which I am aware.

3. If elected in November, what will you do in the upcoming term to improve the equitable distribution of open space in order to serve the many and diverse needs of Somerville residents?

Since my election in 1997, I have championed the creation of open, usable space in connection with development proposals in the City. I have also worked with numerous neighborhood groups in planning the renovations of existing parks and the creation of new parks. Since my first year on the Board of Aldermen, I sponsored and supported numerous orders for the creation of "dog parks" and will continue working on that issue.

4. In 2005, the City Clerk mailed out a brochure about responsible dog ownership along with dog license renewal applications. 2005 was also the fifth year that the Animal Control Department and the Health Department participated in the state-wide Annual Rabies Vaccination Day. What else do you think the City of Somerville can do to promote responsible dog ownership?

The placement of plastic bags and containers in problem areas. Also, a more active animal control office where residents can contact the animal control officer about problem owners and the officer would work with that problem owner to try to remedy problems such as roaming off-leash dogs or the failure of the owner to clean up waste.

Somerville Dog Owners Group Questionnaire (continued)

5. Do you own a dog/dogs?

Yes

If you answered “no” to question 5, please skip to question 6.

5a. Please provide your dog(s) name(s) and describe a typical day in the life of your dog(s).

Buzzie is my six year old Golden Retriever. Before him, I had Angus, also a Golden Retriever, for almost thirteen years. A typical day involves at least three walks and play time with me and usually some play time with neighboring dogs.

5b. How many times per week does your dog get a leash walk off his territory (i.e. off your property)?

At least 21.

5c. How many times per week does your dog get to play off-leash with other dogs (not including dogs in the same household)?

Usually three or four times.

6. In your opinion, what is the place of dogs in our families and communities?

I believe that the companionship of dogs play an important role in the lives of many people. Somerville should integrate dog ownership into city events, such as a dog/owner parade, as was done in the past at the Spice of Life Festival in Union Square. Also, the City's Council On Aging might consider having dogs visit senior centers so seniors could "adopt" a dog and have that particular dog visit the senior on a frequent basis.

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